

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 118207

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP, SHUM, ES

SUBJECT: MAY 9 DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

REF: STATE 117386

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL EXCERPT FROM MAY 9
DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING CONCERNING EL SALVADOR. A
CORRECTED CABLE WILL BE SENT WITH THE NECESSARY CHANGES.

BEGIN QUOTE:

2. LET ME OFFER YOU ONE THING HERE, BECAUSE IT HAS TO
DO WITH EL SALVADOR -- IT JUST DOESN'T RISE TO THE
HEIGHT OF AN OPENING STATEMENT:

3. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, TWO U.S. OFFICIALS WHO ARE ARRIVING
IN SAN SALVADOR TODAY TO CONSULT WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
AND SOME PRIVATE CITIZENS ON THE BASIC SITUATION THERE.
THEY ARE: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTER-AMERICAN
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AFFAIRS SALLY SHELTON; AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS, MARK SCHNEIDER.

4. THE SITUATION ABOUT WHICH THEY WILL BE CONSULTING
RESTS ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER
OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND DISTURBANCES IN THAT COUNTRY

WHICH WE HAVE SEEN.

5. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE CONTINUING HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS IN EL SALVADOR, MANY OF WHICH STEM FROM THE NEED FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC REFORM IN THAT COUNTRY. WE HAVE ADDRESSED THAT SET OF PROBLEMS WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

6. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY ENCOURAGED DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS CRITICS INCLUDING ARCHBISHOP ROMERO, LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND LABOR LEADERS.

7. WE HAVE ALSO, AS YOU KNOW, BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THESE TWO OFFICIALS, SENT A NUMBER OF U.S. OFFICIALS TO EL SALVADOR TO DISCUSS OUR HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT DIALOGUE IN THAT COUNTRY IS IMPORTANT AND DIALOGUE WITH THAT COUNTRY IS IMPORTANT ON THESE QUESTIONS.

8. THAT SIMPLY ARISES, FRANKLY, FROM A STORY OF A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO -- THE GUIDANCE THAT I JUST READ HAS BEEN IN MY FOLDER FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS.

9. Q. WELL, BOTH OF THESE OFFICIALS ARE WELL KNOWN HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES IN THE DEPARTMENT. IS THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SUGGESTION THAT THE EL SALVADORIANS ARE ABOUT TO "SHAPE UP"? OR THE REVERSE? A. WE ARE IN FACT DOWN THERE FOR CONSULTATIONS, TO DISCUSS WHAT I HAVE SAID, WHERE A SERIES OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND OTHER PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE OBVIOUSLY BEEN OF SOME CONCERN IN EL SALVADOR ITSELF.

10. HODDING, COULD I JUST ASK, PERHAPS A NAIVE QUESTION -- BUT WHAT BUSINESS IS IT OF THEM? IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S AN INTERNAL DEMONSTRATION. YOU ARE SENDING OUT PEOPLE TO DISCUSS HUMAN RIGHTS. I KNOW -- I GUESS THE POLICY IS THAT HUMAN RIGHTS IS AN INTERNATIONAL CONCERN; BUT IT HAS THAT SUGGESTION OF -- LIKE SOVIET OFFICIALS GOING TO PRAGUE BECAUSE THERE WERE SOME DEMONSTRATIONS THAT UNNERVED THEM. A. I WOULD SIMPLY POINT OUT THAT WE HAVE SENT HIGH RANKING REPRESENTATIVES OF THIS GOVERNMENT TO COUNTRIES STARTING ON THE EASTERN AND WESTERN BORDERS OF THIS COUNTRY AND THE SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN -- AND EXTENDING ALL THE WAY AROUND THE GLOBE.

THIS IS PART OF A CONSISTENT PATTERN OF CONSULTATION WHICH HAS BEEN FOLLOWED WITH A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES

ON THE BASIC QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. WE ARE NOT IMPOSING A SOLUTION ON EL SALVADOR. WE ARE URGING, HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS CRITICS TO ENGAGE IN A DIALOGUE WHICH MIGHT RESOLVE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE VERY CLEAR THERE.

11. Q. ON THE EL SALVADOR QUESTION, DO WE STILL HAVE ANY MILITARY AND/OR ECONOMIC AID RELATIONSHIP WITH EL SALVADOR? A. LET ME GET YOU EXACTLY WHAT THE SITUATION IS ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM. I AM NOT AWARE OF ALL THE FACTS.

12.Q.MY UNDERSTANDING IS, AND I COULD BE WRONG -- I AM NOT SURE -- THAT IS WHY I ASKED -- THAT EL SALVADOR UNCLASSIFIED

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SEVERED THOSE RELATIONSHIPS RATHER THAN SUBMIT TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROCESS -- THAT AT THE TIME WHEN THE FIRST REPORT CAME -- A. YOUR MEMORY AND MINE ARE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL I GET A CLARIFICATION ON IT.

13. Q. MY QUESTION IS: ARE THERE FURTHER SANCTIONS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS AVAILABLE TO USE AGAINST A COUNTRY THAT HAS ALREADY HAD ITS AID RELATIONSHIP CUT OFF? A. WELL NOW CLEARLY, THEY ARE NOT.

14. Q. WHAT ABOUT -- A. WELL, WE HAVE THAT RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE LAW. CERTAINLY THAT.

15. Q. A FINE DISTINCTION. A. THAT IS A BILLET THAT WE CAN AND DO UTILIZE. BUT AT ANY RATE THE PRESUMPTION OF THE QUESTION I'VE GOT TO JUST CHECK -- WHICH IS WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE NO LONGER ANY ONGOING ECONOMIC OR MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH EL SALVADOR. I SIMPLY DON'T KNOW.

16. HODDING, BEYOND THAT, THERE ARE NO SANCTIONS WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSED, OR COULD BE IMPOSED AGAINST A COUNTRY -- A. ASIDE FROM THOSE THAT ARE ESTABLISHED BY LAW OR BY THE PROGRAMS THAT WE HAVE WITH THEM -- NO.

17. Q. HODDING, DO YOU KNOW WHETHER THESE TWO WERE INVITED, OR WHETHER THEY REQUESTED TO GO? AND HOW LONG HAS THIS TRIP BEEN PLANNED? OR DID THEY JUST, SINCE THEY WENT TO MEXICO WITH VANCE JUST THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO JUST GO DOWN THE ROAD.

A. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG IT HAS BEEN PLANNED. I EXPECT THAT AS USUAL, THEIR TRIP WAS BY MUTUAL CONSENT AS UNCLASSIFIED

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HAS ALMOST ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE. AS A MATTER OF FACT,
ALWAYS THE CASE IN SUCH VISITS.

18. Q. COULD I FOLLOW UP BERNIE'S QUESTION EARLIER?
I AM A LITTLE BIT UNSURE FROM THE WAY YOU DESCRIBED
THE CONSULTATIONS THEY HAVE BEEN HOLDING THERE. YOU
KNOW THERE IS A THIN LINE BETWEEN CONSULTATIONS AND
INTERFERENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES' INTERNAL AFFAIRS.
A. THAT IS WELL UNDERSTOOD.

19. Q. WHAT IS THAT,-- HOW DO YOU DEFINE THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN CONSULTATIONS AND INTERFERENCE -- BECAUSE IF
THEY ARE GOING TO BE TALKING TO OPPOSITION LEADERS,
THEY ARE GOING TO BE DISCUSSING -- A. WELL, LET ME
GIVE YOU AN ANALOGY OF -- WE HAVE HAD RECENT VISITORS
TO THIS COUNTRY WHO HAVE HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH OPPOSITION
LEADERS AND WITH OPPONENTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY.
WE FEEL THAT THAT IN FACT IS NOT A HIGHLY UNUSUAL KIND OF
ACTIVITY AND THAT IN DISCUSSING MATTERS WITHIN THAT
COUNTRY SO LONG AS WE ARE NOT ADVOCATING ACTION WHICH
WOULD IN FACT BE AIMED AT THE OVERTHROW OF THAT GOVERN-
MENT OR THE REPLACEMENT OF IT BY SOME OTHER FORM (WHICH
WE CERTAINLY DO NOT) THEN WE FEEL THAT THIS IS A
PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE APPROACH TO USE.

20. Q. WELL, HERE YOU ARE, ENCOURAGING A DIALOGUE
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS CRITICS. I DON'T KNOW
IF PEOPLE COME TO THE UNITED STATES AND ENCOURAGE THAT
SORT OF THING -- I MEAN, IT'S JUST TAKEN AS --
A. OH, THEY ENCOURAGE REJECTION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY.

21. Q. OH -- IS THAT MEANT TO BE A PRECEDBNT? I MEAN,
THEN DOES THAT MAKE IT PERMISSIBLE? A. I AM SAYING
THAT IN FACT IT SEEMS TO BE COMMONLY ACCEPTABLE PRACTICE.

22. Q. WELL, I AM NOT SO CLEAR THAT IT REALLY IS. YOU
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KNOW THERE ARE A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHICH DON'T
PRACTICE THIS SORT OF THING. A. I UNDERSTAND THAT.
BUT WE CANNOT BE THERE EXCEPT AT THEIR ACCEPTANCE --
ACCEPTING THIS TEAM COMING IN AND ANNOUNCING WHAT IT
INTENDS TO DO BEFOREHAND THE PREMISE IS THAT THEY
ACCEPT THAT KIND OF DIALOGUE.

23. Q. HODDING, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE THAT THE US BEING WHAT IT IS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, IT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS

AN INTERFERENCE OR AS A PRESSURE? A. I HAVE CERTAINLY NOTED A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHO HAVE FELT THAT OUR RAISING OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IS AN INTERFERENCE IN THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS. I HAVE ALSO NOTED, WHEN ASKED THAT SAME QUESTION BEFORE, THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN BASIC DOCUMENTS TO WHICH EL SALVADOR AND VIRTUALLY EVERY OTHER COUNTRY IS A SIGNATORY, WHICH ALLOWS THE RAISING OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS AS MATTERS OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE AND INTERNATIONAL CONSENT.

24. Q. BUT HODDING, THERE IS A MECHANISM FOR THAT, ISN'T THERE? A. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MECHANISMS, INCLUDING BILATERAL.

25. Q. ALL RIGHT, BUT I THOUGHT THE PREFERENCE IN DEALING WITH CENTRAL AMERICA AND LATIN AMERICA IN GENERAL WAS THE MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK. A. WE CERTAINLY ENCOURAGE -- ENCOURAGE AT GREAT LENGTH -- THE EXPANSION AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. THERE ARE COUNTRIES, HOWEVER, WHICH HAVE NOT SEEN FIT TO ALLOW THAT GROUP TO COME IN. WE BELIEVE, OBVIOUSLY IN THAT CASE, THAT PURSUING IT UNDER BILATERAL AS WELL AS MULTILATERAL AUSPICES, MAKES UNCLASSIFIED

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SENSE.

26. Q. WELL, IS EL SALVADOR ONE OF THOSE COUNTRIES? A. I HAVE NO IDEA -- BUT WE ALSO PURSUE THESE MATTERS IN COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE ALLOWED THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN. VANCE

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